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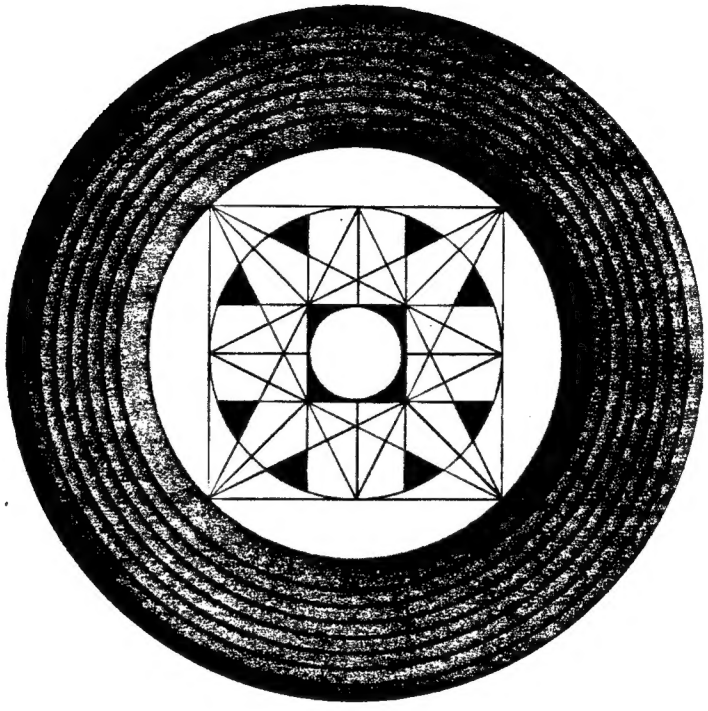
SPECTRUM

TOWARD UNITY–AND–DIVERSITY AMONG ALL PEOPLES



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TOWARD A HIGHER SYSTEM OF WORLD LAW AND JUSTICE

Roger W. Sperry

The time has passed when nations should be allowed to do as they individually wish with regard to global matters, each striving solely in its own interests, with the more powerful now able to destroy all humanity and more.

For the common good, we need to frame and abide by a higher system of law and justice, designed with less national, more godlike, perspectives for the preservation and welfare of the biosphere as a whole. The intellectual, scientific and moral foundations are already in sight.

Control of nuclear armaments is a logical place to start their implementation. One sees little hope for a permanent, truly satisfactory control of nuclear armaments in the absence of some kind of international world security force, with both the power and know-how to keep nuclear developments under strict suveillance and control, and which presumably would proceed to systematically dismantle existing nuclear weaponry.

The problems of setting up and administering an effective, international force of this kind—involving a first step toward world government—can hardly be more grave, formidable or insoluble than those we are destined to encounter on any alternative course.

Instead of accepting prevailing impressions that such a solution is hopeless and impossible, we can start thinking positively about ways to best achieve it. One would expect to build from existing organizations, especially the United Nations; but new thinking and creative strategies are now needed to an extent that suggestions from high school and college students might be as helpful as those from venerable politicians. With the aid of the media, we can extend the search for an acceptable plan to the grass-roots level, making it a prominent part of the ambient, public concern.

A starting precondition—for the kind of cooperation needed to organize a world security force—is a formula for determining representation and voting strength that will assure participant nations they will not suffer an unfair loss in relative power, living standards, prestige. This will mean that factors other than population numbers should be taken into account, such as indicators of various economic, educational, military and cultural strengths, reflecting the quality as well as quantity of life, and which collectively might give a realistic measure of each nation's present status and relative rights.

The countries of the world are today sufficiently interrelated and interdependent that, working together through a properly constituted, world governing body, they could bring any recalcitrant nation—even the United States or the Soviet Union—into compliance through united economic and other non-military pressures. But again, instead of dwelling on the complexities and difficulties, we can get busy ironing out the issues and looking for creative solutions.

Another prime requisite will be a set of founding guidelines and principles that justify a higher world order, and which would transcend, but not conflict, with national interests. Principles for law and justice will be needed that all countries can respect, support and agree to be ruled by, regardless of differing ideologies, religious beliefs, cultural values, political biases, and so on.

Some consensus on what is right and wrong, and of what ought to be, is essential when it comes to ordering priorities, making decisions, formulating rules and regulations. Thus far, no such consensus exists at the international level. Even a limited world security system—of the sort envisioned for nuclear controls—will be much more successful if founded on principles and ideals that command common allegiance and a commitment above and beyond those at the national level, just as allegiance to a nation supersedes that to constituent states and provinces.

Just as in the United States, states' rights are respected and protected against federal intervention, one presumes a world security system would not usurp the rights of nations to govern their own internal affairs much as they always have, with the exception of a few things such as nuclear armaments, pollution of the oceans and atmosphere, and so on, that are more reasonably and effectively dealt with at a global level, rather than at national levels.

Peoples of differing faiths and cultures understandably tend to recoil at the thought of being governed by the values and beliefs of opposing ideologies. Capitalist countries don't want to submit to communist values, or vice versa; the same applies to Christians and Muslims, and all the rest. Historically, these ideological and religious differences have always been a main source of world conflict.

There seems little chance, in the forseeable future, that all the different countries are going to be persuaded to give up their beliefs, so as to unite under the ethical principles and values of any ideology currently existing. One can, however, see a reasonable possibility that enough countries might be willing—for purposes of nuclear control—to compromise on a new, relatively neutral, moral and legal code, founded in the truth and world view of science.

Science, here, is not to be taken in the usual, traditional sense of referring to things that can be handled by numbers and measurements alone, and according to which everything in principle—including the human psyche—reduces to quantum mechanics. The reference, rather, is to the latest views in science, which brings a new philosophy, and a new world view.

The feature that is new—and what offers new promise at this time—is the recent revisions that have emerged in science since the late '60's, as a result of the so-called consciousness or mentalist revolution in the behavioral and neuro-sciences. These bring changed views of nature, of the human psyche, of the relation of mind to matter, of the relation of science to values and related developments now transforming the scientific outlook, and its moral and value implications.

Nature and all reality are no longer conceived to be determined solely from below upward, but also from above downward. The higher mental, vital and social forces, including the full spectrum of human needs and values, are now given their due, along with physics and chemistry.

In the past, the choice has been between materialist explanations of natural science, on the one hand, or various mystical, supernatural schemes of religious faith, on the other. The new stance of science rejects both of these, in favor of a newly perceived third choice that integrates both the physical and metaphysical into a consistent view of ourselves and the world. The new outlook manages to incorporate the empirical and the ethical, both what is objectively valid and what is subjectively valued.

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